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THE TRANSFORMERS™

MORE THAN MEETS THE EYE

the war within

PREVIEW

[WRITTEN BY SIMON FURMAN]

[PENCILS & INKS BY DON FIGUEROA]

[COLORS BY DREAMWAVE]

[PRE-PRESS BY KELL-O-GRAPHICS]

[GRAPHIC DESIGN BY PAUL VILLAFUERTE & KEVIN LEE]

[PRESIDENT, ART DIRECTOR PAT LEE]

[VP, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF ROGER LEE]

[DIRECTOR OF MANAGEMENT DEREK CHOO-WING]

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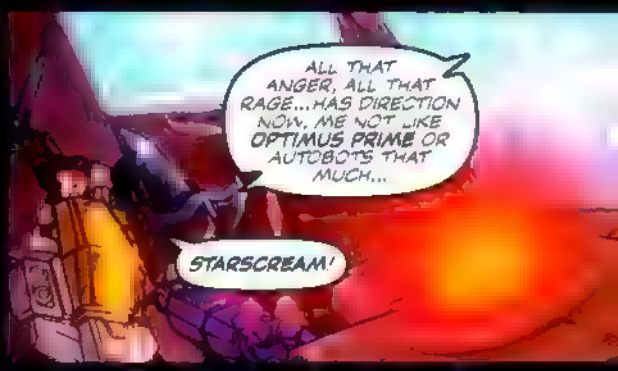

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donfigueroa
sketches

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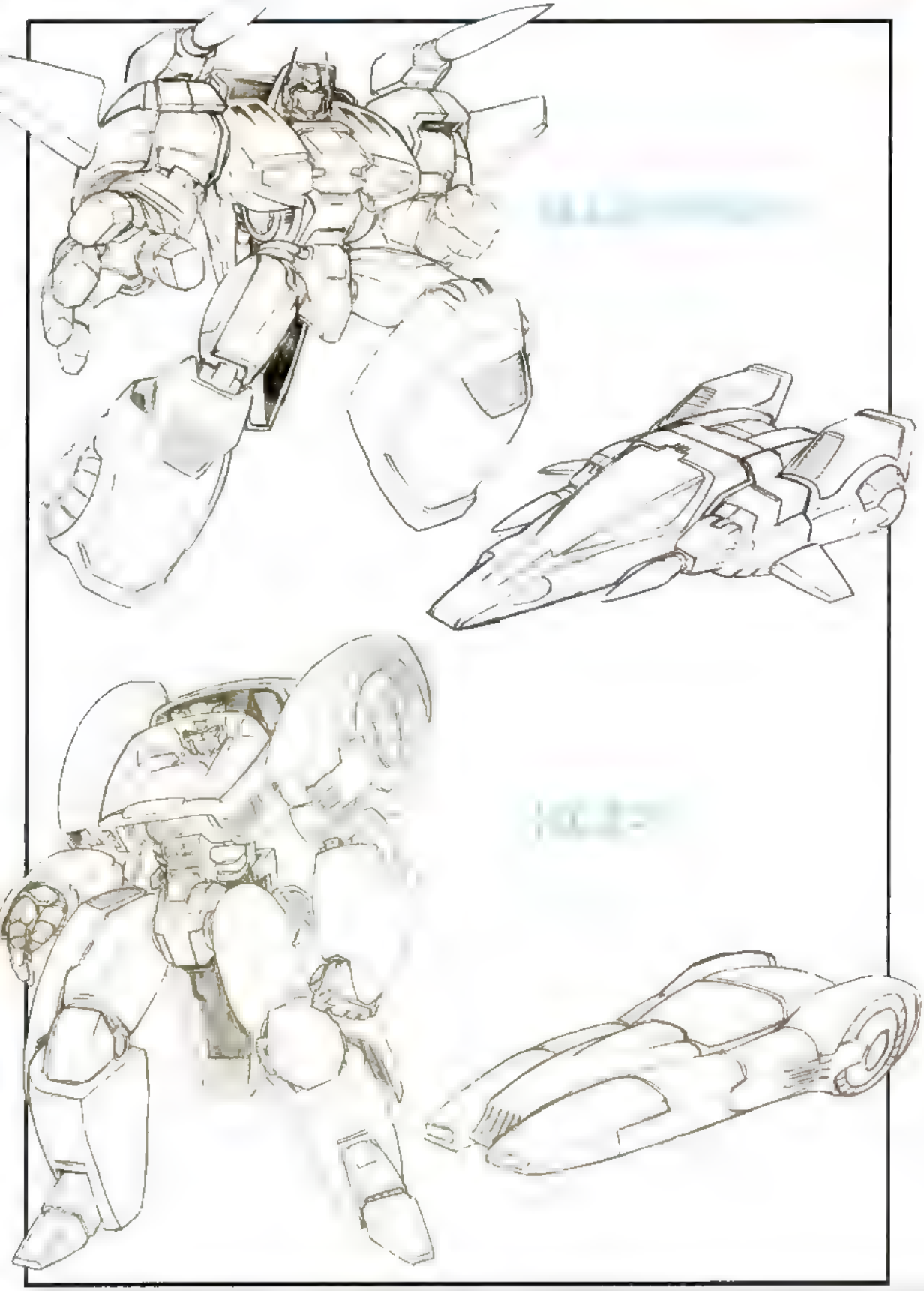

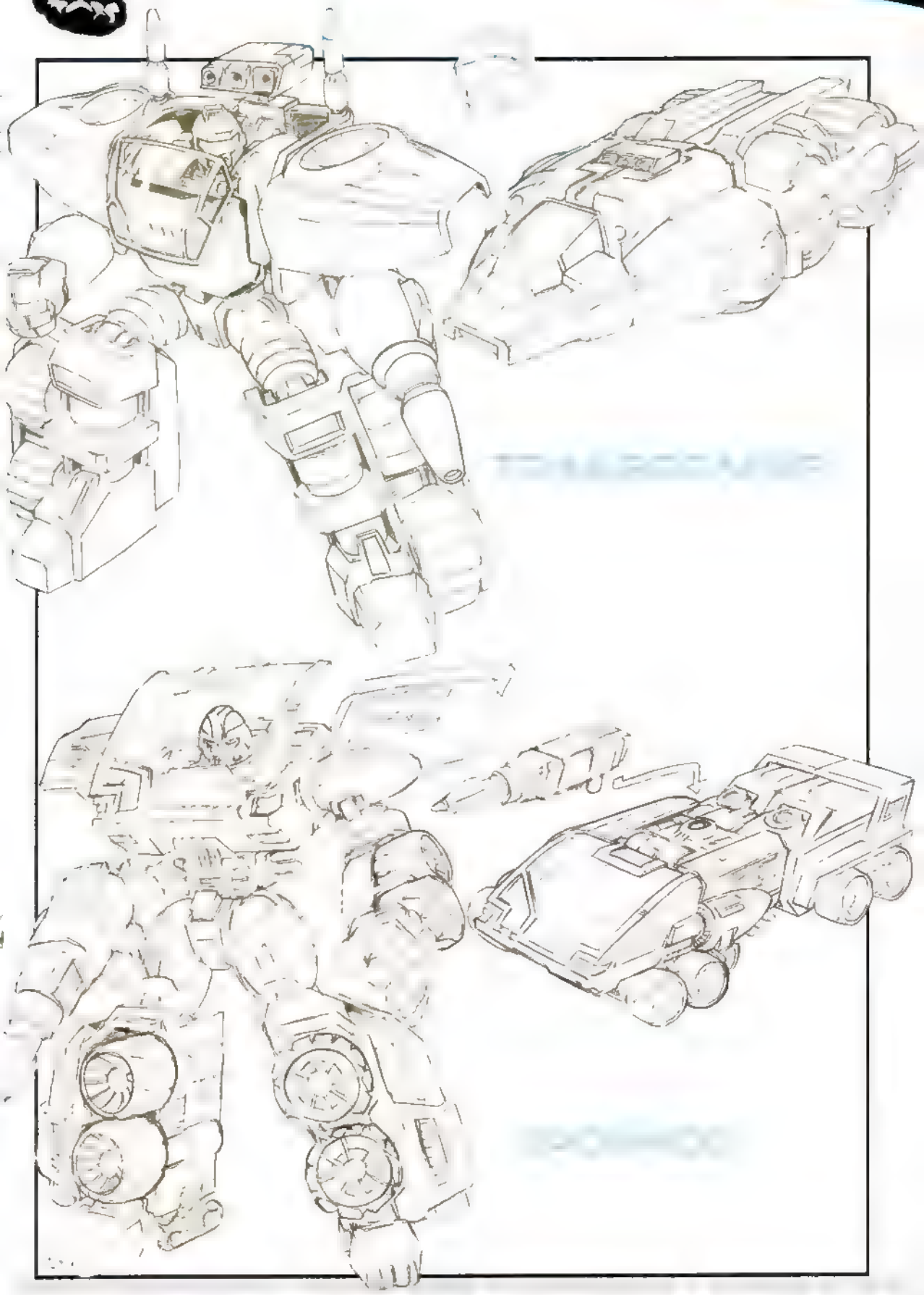

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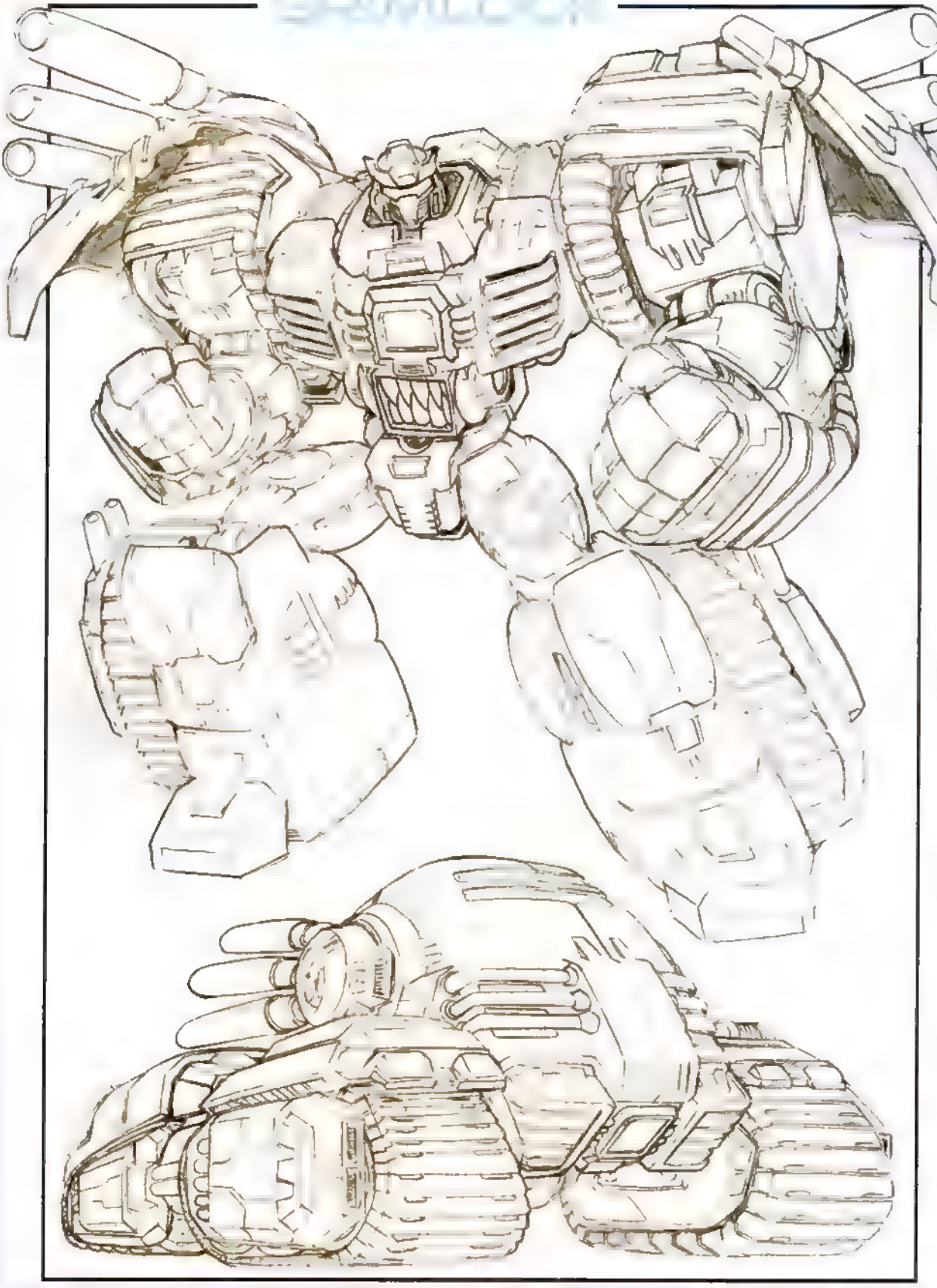
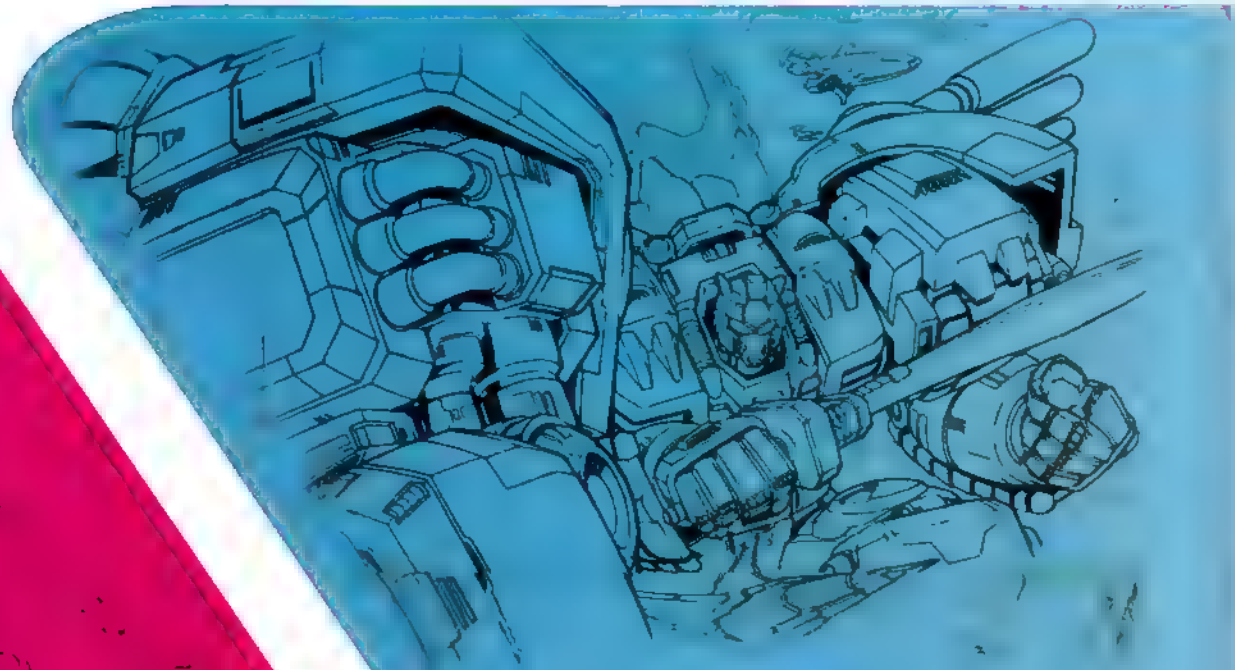




So, why the War Within?

Why, of all the stories I could have told — and trust me, there are many — did I choose to go back in time, to Cybertron, to the start of civil war between the Autobots and the Decepticons? In some ways, it was the hardest of choices, and in others it was the simplest. Let me explain:

The fans. Until I attended a Botcon convention in 1997, I had no idea that there were so many of them. No idea how loyal and dedicated they were to the worlds and characters that I (among many others) had had a hand in creating and sustaining. I wrote Marvel's original Gen 1 series (all the way through the run of the UK comic and, after Bob Budiansky's epic run, to the end of the US comic) and the Generation 2 series in a strange vacuum, unaware that I was creating something that would be pored over, analyzed, dissected and critiqued. It was only at Botcon '97, as I stumbled hopelessly over questions about plot points and conflicting continuities, that I realized that Transformers was very much alive and kicking.

So Dreamwave had the license. Like I say, I don't know why it hadn't happened earlier, but here it was. And the best thing? It was a small, independent company, new and with something to prove. And more important, they cared! About what had gone before, about the characters, about the fans. I had to be in on this, I wanted to write Transformers again. Thankfully, Pat Lee (and Dreamwave in general) wanted that too.

Make no mistake, they had an excellent writer in Chris Sarracini. He was already off and running on the first six-issue Generation 1 series long before I came on board. And, secretly, I was glad. The weight of expectation on those first issues was huge, and Chris (and Pat, whose passion for the characters comes through in every exquisitely penciled line... even the borders are a labor of love!) rose to the challenge exceptionally well. Now, all I had to do was follow that. Eek.

So it came back to the question: what do I do? It seemed pointless to try and raise the bar, or up the stakes. Chris and Pat had set it too high. And besides, I wanted this to be something that was all me.

Of all the continuities, stories, time zones and sagas that had come before, what story did I most want to tell? And more importantly, which story did people want to read. Gen 1, Gen 2, Beast Wars, Beast Machines, the movie... somewhere in-between? Comic continuity? Cartoon continuity? In the end, Dreamwave's whole approach to Transformers gave me the answer. The whole ethos seemed to be to make Transformers as accessible as possible, to as many people as possible. No specific continuity was going to be adopted and followed, and while mindful of all that had come before, there was an effort to open the door to new readers, younger readers.

So it had to be Gen 1, and I decided to take it right back to the beginning, show the root causes of the civil war, the initial flashpoints and confrontations. But since this story had, in several versions, already been told, there had to be more. So I shook things up a little, played with people's expectations. For a start, we were going to see all these familiar characters in unfamiliar forms. The artist was going to have to retro-fit all these characters, re-imagine them in their Cybertronian forms and modes. And then there were the central characters of Optimus Prime and Megatron. I wondered... was Optimus Prime always this great hero? Was Megatron something other than this serial villain obsessed with conquest? And what if Grimlock, always a favorite character of mine, was there in the thick of things, proving that there's definitely more to him than meets the eye? As a central conceit, I wondered... what if originally Optimus Prime didn't think Cybertron was worth fighting for? What then? Why 'The War Within'? Because it's not just about the struggle for Cybertron, it's about the internal conflicts, the ones that make characters what they are. As I wrote in a general series preamble, 'sometimes the truest hero is the one that don't yet know their own self'.

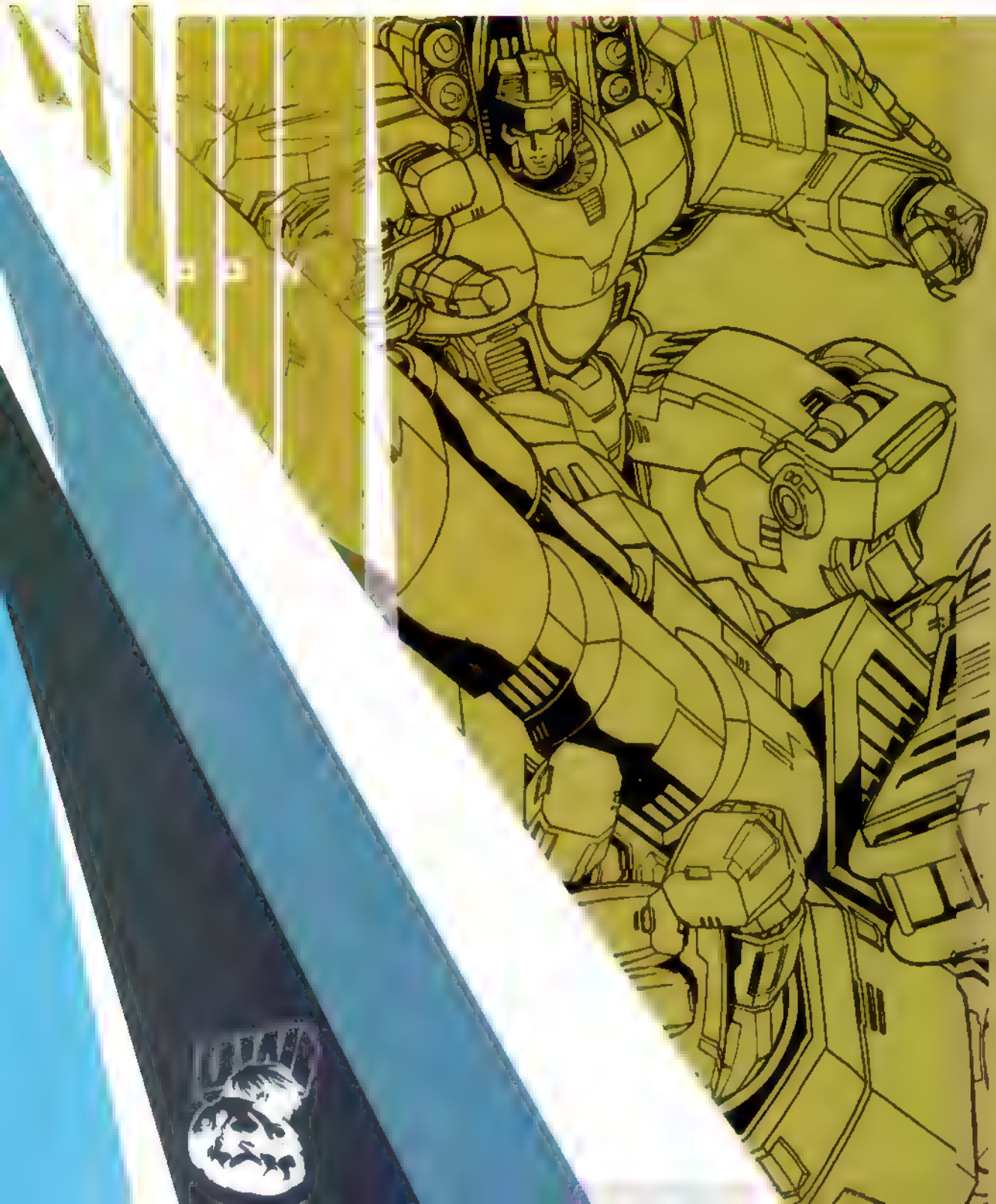
I pitched the idea to Dreamwave. They liked it. The series would provide a solid backdrop to the later stories. It also freed me up creatively, allowed me start with a clean slate. Sure, it would have been great to run with some of those half-finished storylines from the classic series, but this was fresh, exciting. And besides, with Titan Books collecting and re-packaging the classic material in trade paperbacks, there was a degree of closure on that stuff. I was content to freeze those stories (and storylines) in time and move on.

There's always a pressure to deliver on something as established and much-loved as Transformers, but that's good as well. It's inspired me to try even harder to make The War Within the best it could possibly be. But still I was worried. I needed an artist who would throw him or herself into the series with the same insane gusto, who would take what I had written and run with it in ways even I couldn't imagine.

Thankfully, I got Don Figueroa. I'd never seen Don's work, though he'd been very active in the realms of Transformers fan fiction illustration. When I saw his first (retro) designs (for Grimlock, I think) I was delighted, inspired even. This was great stuff... much better, it has to be said, than my somewhat half-realized suggestions ('well, he needs to be big, some sort of truck maybe') merited. Design after design followed (some for characters that weren't even going to be in the series!), each more innovative and breathtaking than the last (and they worked... I mean, they transformed... there was no cheating involved). But one question still remained, could Don handle successive pages of comic continuity. The answer, again, was resoundingly yes. I'd prepared a four-page preview story, a more or less self-contained chunk that would work peripherally to the main series. When I saw Don's art for that, all my concerns disappeared. I couldn't wait to see what he would do with issue #1 of the series proper.

I've not been disappointed — just wait until you see the double-page spread of Cybertron that opens issue #1! The first preview story has grown into a second preview story, and in the six issues that follow you'll see your expectations (and Cybertron itself) shaken up as never before. Transformers is eighteen years old, an amazing run for a toy-related concept, and my intent is to help keep it going for another eighteen years. Enjoy!

-Simon Furman, August 2002



First off, how does it feel to be working on something with the Transformers label on it?
An awesome feeling I can't even begin to describe! I've been a Transformers fan, since the beginning I have some of the toys, older comics and even the cartoon on tape (I have them on DVD now)
I also wanted to be a comic-book artist, so working on a Transformers comic is like hitting two birds at once!

What were some of your other projects you worked on?
Back in 96, I did a book called Innercircle for a VERY small company, it's about Cyborgs and Mutants, stuff I really like, but it didn't last and the company went under. I never got paid for my work but at least I did got published.

Do you feel that the experience of working on other projects has prepared you for this?
Yes it did. Before that, I was just all about Pin-ups, I didn't know how to do layouts, facial expressions or backgrounds

Have you been using existing Transformers designs or creating your own?
I redesigned some of the classic Characters from scratch, some may still look familiar some will look totally different.
The story takes place way before the Transformers even came to Earth, so I figured, they shouldn't have a hood of a Datsun for chests
And also, There are no Jaguars or any other Earth Animals in Cybertron millions of years ago, so don't expect Grimlock and Ravage to look the same

What do you think you can bring to the Transformers universe?
Another Fan's touch, I think it's great that DW hires people who are actually familiar with the Transformers. People who actually grew up with the characters and the stories

Do you feel that your artwork creates a harmonious unity within the plot of the story?
I think so, I have a much darker style when it comes to drawing Transformers, and I think it suits the plot quite well, after all, this is when the Great War just broke out

What attracted you to work on such a project? Transformers?
Yes, I'm such a big fan of the series, before Dreamwave hired me I was making my own Transformers online comic, a Fan fiction, that to my surprise, was very well received by my fellow fans, I still get Emails About it since I never got to finish the story.

What can we expect art wise, in this book?
It'll be much darker, there should be a lot of war and destruction and since it doesn't involve Humans, I can be as graphic as I want.

How is like working with Simon, and Dreamwave?
It's great! Simon's probably the BEST when it comes to Transformers Stories; He made Grimlock the bad-ass he's supposed to be. He mixed in Science and Technology with Myth and religion and the result is Amazing.
Working with Dreamwave is like a dream come true (no pun intended) I was so Glad they got the TF license and I was really excited about the new series, Pat's rendition of the Transformers is one of the best I've seen and I know the Transformers is in good hands.

Is it nerve-wrecking knowing that you're working on a property that has been so successful?
Kinda, I was more worried about how the fans will react when they see the new "retro" designs, they're all so used to the classic look of Prime's torso looking like a Truck's Cab
Fans love their Characters and don't like change very much. Also, Pat and James are a tough act to follow. Their work is just Awesome!

Are you working on just the pencils? Will you be handling anything else?
Yes, pencils but I will also be doing the Inks for a while, I don't know any inker nearby that can give me a hand; I'll probably have to send the pages to the studio to have them inked if needed

After Transformers, what's next on the agenda?
Not sure yet, I'd like to draw Transformers 'till they go out of style there's so many characters and story possibilities (Beastwars, Beast machines, R.I.D., Armada..) it's hard to get bored with them, I'd like to draw Non robot titles as well, anything Sci-Fi/Fantasy or even horror

Can you give us any hints of what to expect with the story?
This will not be anything like the Episode "War Dawn" ;)

Do you feel that you have evolved as an artist?
Very much so, I've learned a lot from looking at Pat and James' work and I've added them to my own style.

Finally, any parting words to leave your fans with?
I have Fans? Well, I'd like to thank them for the support and I'm glad most of them liked the new designs

-Don Figueroa, August 2002

OFFICIAL RELEASE DATE: OCTOBER 2002 • TRANSFORMERS THE WAR WITHIN ISSUE ONE • VOLUME ONE

TRANSFORMERS THE WAR WITHIN

The legend of Transformers begins with the belief of One. Facing a devastating civil war on Cybertron, Optimus Prime faces his first — and greatest — challenge. Before he can deal with the threat posed by Megatron and the Decepticons, the new Autobot leader must look within... and decide if Cybertron is worth saving at all! Witness the internal struggle of a great leader, and the creation of Transformers history. If you thought you knew it all...

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TRANSFORMERS
ARMADA
ISSUE 3
YOU CAN RUN
BUT YOU CAN'T HIDE
SEPTEMBER 2002

TRANSFORMERS #6

THE FINAL ISSUE... IT'S ALL BUILT UP TO THIS

WRITTEN BY **CHRIS SARRACINI** PENCILLED BY **PAT LEE**
INKED BY **ROB ARMSTRONG & ERIK SANDER**
BACKGROUNDS BY **EDWIN GARCIA** COLORED BY **RAMIL SUNGA & GARY YEUNG**

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TRANSFORMERS

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